

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 have been amended, and new claims 24-26 have been added. Claims 1-26 are presently pending in the application.

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Dung Anh Le for his thorough search and review of the prior-art, his careful consideration and examination of the present application and claims, and his indication that claims 4, 7, 8 and 15-24 contain allowable subject matter. In particular, the Examiner stated that claims 15-24 are allowed and that claims 4, 7 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has rewritten claim 4, 7 and 8 as new independent claim 24-26, respectively.

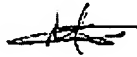
Regarding the objection to the drawings, Applicant submits herewith a proposed drawing correction that identifies FIG. 2B as prior art.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 9-14 on prior art. Regarding these rejections, claims 1-3, 5 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Inoue et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,686,108), and claims 6 and 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue et al.

Regarding these rejections of the claims, Applicant would like to thank Examiner Le for the oral correspondence with Applicant's representative, Kenton R. Mullins, on November 1, 2004, at which time it was indicated by Examiner Le that independent claim 1 as amended above appears to distinguish over the prior art of record. Examiner Le reserved the right to review the matter in greater detail and to conduct an update search. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the outstanding rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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